



DIOCESE OF HARRISBURG

OFFICE OF THE BISHOP

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June 18, 2025

Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

Today, we celebrate Corpus Christi Sunday, a Feast Day dedicated to honoring the profound mystery of our faith: the Real Presence of Jesus Christ in the Eucharist. This day serves as an essential reminder of the deep love and commitment that God has to each one of us, as He is truly, really, and substantially present under the humble appearances of bread and wine.

Today also begins Religious Freedom Week, coinciding with the feast of Sts. Thomas More and John Fisher. Having the freedom to gather to celebrate our religious beliefs is a great blessing and one that this week calls us to remember.

Religious freedom empowers us to live out our beliefs openly and serves as a beacon of hope for many. It allows the Church, and all religious communities, to express their faith in public and contribute positively to the fabric of our society. As our late Holy Father, Pope Francis, once said: "Religious freedom is not limited to freedom of worship; that equal dignity and equal opportunities will be concretely recognized for each group and for every individual; that no forms of discrimination exist and that fundamental human rights are not violated but promoted." (Address to Authorities, Civil Society, and Diplomatic Corp of the Kingdom of Bahrain, November 3, 2022) By standing together in support of this freedom, we honor our own beliefs and advocate for the dignity of every individual, irrespective of their faith background.

However, while we celebrate this fundamental right, we must also confront a stark reality - the existence of religious persecution and hatred that persists across the globe. Many, including those right here in our communities, face discrimination, oppression, and violence simply for their beliefs. As we reflect on our blessings, please remember those who are being silenced and marginalized.

This week, I encourage each of you to learn more about the importance of religious freedom. Share stories with your family and friends, educate others about the realities of religious persecution, and encourage our government leaders to strengthen laws that protect this sacred right.

Embrace this Religious Freedom Week with open hearts and determined spirits. Together, we can develop an environment where every individual feels safe to express their beliefs. During this Jubilee Year of Hope, may we be witnesses to hope, united in our mission to uphold the dignity and freedom of all peoples of faith.

Sincerely in Christ,

Most Reverent Timothy C. Senior
Bishop of Harrisburg